



## Media Kit

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**History:** The Department of the Interior's Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations (Buy-Back Program) implements the land consolidation component of the *Cobell* Settlement, which provided a \$1.9 billion fund to purchase fractional interests in trust or restricted land from willing sellers at fair market value. Interested individual landowners receive payments for voluntarily selling their fractional land interests. There are approximately [150 unique reservations](#) with fractional interests, and nearly 245,000 owners across Indian Country who are eligible to participate in the Program.

**About the Buy-Back Program:** Many landowners see little or no economic benefit from what are often small, undivided interests in lands that cannot be utilized due to their highly fractionated state. Sales of land interests through the Program will result in land consolidation, which enables tribes to manage and use reservation lands for the benefit of the tribal community and generations to come. Consolidated interests are immediately transferred to tribal governments in trust.

**Progress to Date:** The Buy-Back Program began making offers in December 2013, and has already paid hundreds of millions of dollars to individual landowners and has restored the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of acres of land to tribal governments. Updated statistics are [available weekly](#).

**Direct Payments to Landowners:** Individuals who [choose to sell](#) their interests receive payments directly into their Individual Indian Money (IIM) accounts. In addition to receiving fair market value for their land based on objective appraisals, sellers receive \$75 per offer.

**Financial Planning:** It is important that landowners think strategically about how to use the funds they receive from selling their land. [Financial planning assistance](#), including information on savings, budgeting, managing credit or debt, avoiding scams and fraud, or estate planning, is available through the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST).

**Fair Market Value:** Before implementation, the Department's appraisal methodology was reviewed by [The Appraisal Foundation](#), a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to the development of appraisal standards and establishing qualifications criteria for appraisers.

**Outreach throughout Indian Country:** Tribal leadership, participation, and facilitation are crucial to the success of the Program. The Department of the Interior works cooperatively through [formal agreements with tribal governments](#) to help facilitate outreach and public education around the Program. Landowners have [many resources](#) to learn about the Program to make an informed decision about their land, including the Trust Beneficiary Call Center (888-678-6836), local Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) or Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) office personnel, and tribal staff on the reservation of jurisdiction. Extensive [frequently asked questions/answers](#) are also available.

**Lasting Change:** A percentage of Program sales, up to \$60 million, is contributed to the [Cobell Education Scholarship Fund](#), which provides financial assistance to American Indian and Alaska Native students wishing to pursue post-secondary and graduate education and training. This contribution is in addition to the amounts paid to individual sellers, so it does not reduce the amount landowners receive for their interests. The Fund is administered by the American Indian Graduate Center in New Mexico.